Fires in the Mirror Modified Worksheet

Based on your viewing of the entire youtube version of Fires in the Mirror which was created from the play for presentation on television, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

Who: Following the events of a Hasidic Jewish man and the seven year old black child he unintentionally killed, after loosing control of his car.

What: The incident caused a lot of tension and riots between the black and Jewish communities. We follow the interview turned monologues of many involved in the conflict.

When: 1991-2

Where: Crown Heights – Brooklyn, New York

Why: This play was so important for its time, shedding light on many different views of the situation.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion would be the riots that ensued due to the response of the public. The accident itself and delayed response of medical treatment sparked protests between these two communities. Not only did this shed light on the racial issues in Crown Heights, it prompted the interviews, which lead to this eye opening play.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

I would say there were a few things that could be classified as the unique factor. One incident might have been when the group of black teens stabbed the Jewish student from Australia on the street.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

“Will these two groups be able to put aside their personal issues around the event, and just morn for the lose of both individuals?”

5. In your opinion what is the most theatrical segment of the video version of the play and explain why do you think it is so powerful?

I would say the most theatrical moments came from the individual’s initial reactions to the event. They are unpredictable and startling. I wanted to meet more and more of them and just see where they stood on this issue. Every time a new character was introduced you saw a whole new stance on the events, which really helped you connect not only with the event itself but also with the opinions of all of the other characters.

6. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Response to a tragedy

Racial differences/tension

Cultural/identity differences

Crown Heights in general

7. Television allows the actress to create mini sets, a variety of lighting effects, and detailed costume pieces for the presentation of her many characters, not to mention graphic footage of the actual events in Crown Heights. This is frankly not possible to accomplish on the stage which requires that the action move rapidly between one scene and the other leaving little if any time for a change of dress, settings, lights, and props. Describe some of the varieties of these production details that struck you as particularly effective.

I loved being able to see footage of the actual events that were occurring. This not only helped really drive her performance, but got me wanting to go off on my own and research this tragedy. The use of mini sets was also helpful in individualizing these people and their stories.